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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SA/FO, SA/A, S/CR, EUR/RPM  
NSC FOR AMEND AND HARRIMAN  
OSD FOR BREZEZINSKI  
REL NATO/AUST/NZ/ISAF  
CENTCOM FOR CG CFC-A, CG CJTF-76

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958 N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: PRT/BAMYAN: LARGE OPIUM SEIZURE HIGHLIGHT PLUSES  
AND MINUSES OF BAMYAN LAW ENFORCEMENT

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Bamyán police found a 1.9 ton opium cache stashed away in caves near Bamyán City, and arrested three suspects. Counter-narcotics officials from Kabul and a gaggle of press witnessed the PRT weigh, transport, and burn the opium on December 28. Behind the scenes, however, the government released the suspected opium owners prior to incarceration. It is unclear whether the opium burned represents the entire cache found. Law enforcement's messy handling of the event outside of the public's view underscores the need for a more credible, ethical, competent law enforcement community in Bamyán. A recent drug bust underlines the disparity between form and substance of Bamyán law enforcement. END SUMMARY.

BUSTED!

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2. (SBU) Bamyán Chief of Police Ghulam Ali Wahadat outlined details of a successful drug bust to PRToff on December 21 when he requested the PRT's help to destroy the confiscated opium. Wahadat explained that police had pursued a large truck on December 11 containing three individuals when the truck refused to stop at a vehicle checkpoint, but explained that, "we did not have enough fuel to keep up the chase." Police were surprised to find the same three individuals again at a cave complex just outside of Bamyán City on December 16. The three were caught in the process of loading their truck with a large amount of opium, which they had apparently stashed in the cave. Police immediately arrested the three men, seized the opium, and sealed it in a container at ANP headquarters.

3. (SBU) Police learned through routine questioning that the three individuals, one from Helmand and two from Herat, were attempting to smuggle their opium from Ghor Province through Yakawlang District in Bamyán. Wahadat speculated that the opium would travel north through Samangan and Balkh Provinces into Tajikistan and to points beyond. "We were lucky to catch them when we did," Wahadat admitted.

Burn, Baby Burn (Eventually)

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4. (SBU) Upon hearing Wahadat's story, the PRT immediately prepared a burn site inside the PRT's outer perimeter (concertina wire) but in public view. (NOTE: The PRT learned the hard way the need for better control of the site. When a previous PRT contingent burned confiscated opium, the burn lasted well through the night. Much of the unburned opium was missing the following morning. END NOTE.) A week later, on December 28, officials from the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN) and MOI arrived to witness the burn.

5. (SBU) The event had a circus-like atmosphere. Children hung around police HQ all day, eating fruit and sweets for sale from small vendors. Local and Kabul press milled through the crowd, interviewing anyone willing to comment. General Wahadat was happy to accommodate: "This is your ANP at work, protecting you," he told reporters. Chief Prosecutor Azizullah Hadafmánd likewise told the MCN officials that they could "stop drugs in Bamyán" with better support from Kabul.

6. (SBU) Digital and phone cameras flashed constantly as PRToff (with significant help from the PRT's motorpool crew) numbered, weighed, and recorded the weight of each individual opium bag (minus the 5 samples we saw taken by ANP officers) for the next 90 minutes. Hadafmánd made a point to write additional, superfluous notation on each bag in Dari, stopping frequently to pose for pictures. In all, the PRT weighed and collected 1,746.5 kg (approx. 3842.3 lbs.) of opium. (NOTE: An additional 23 kg of hashish was left and re-locked into the container, as officials said the paperwork to approve the hashish burn was not yet finished. END NOTE.) The PRT escorted the measured opium back to the burn site, prepped the fuel, and gave Hadafmánd the

incendiary grenade to start the burn, which he brandished in front of onlookers before tossing it into the pit.

#### After Smoke Clears, Corruption Looms

17. (SBU) The chaotic, but largely successful event has been marred by subsequent revelations. MCN officer Mohibullah Loodin regretfully told PRToff on December 29 that the three suspects were no longer in custody. Loodin could not provide details (promising to do so after reporting to the Minister), but he explained that the suspects disappeared sometime after their arrest but before they reached the Bamyan prison. Further, according to Loodin's own sources, the opium cache originally contained over 3 tons (more than 6000 lbs.) of opium when the ANP found it. Loodin promised that MOI would send investigators from Kabul to delve into the missing drugs and disappearing suspects. "It is embarrassing," admitted Loodin.

Comment: Need to Clean House

18. (SBU) The ANP Police Chief and the Chief Prosecutors' cynical manipulation of their good luck in coming across the drugs cache is expected, to some degree. Even in relatively stable and secure Bamyan, officials cannot expect to maintain public support without at least appearing to make an effort to uphold the law. The publicity from the drug bust should generate goodwill among the people for some time.

19. (SBU) The reality of Bamyan law enforcement, however, is a sordid combination of corruption and ineptitude. Justice is far from blind; it appears more likely to be available to the highest bidder. While Governor Habiba Sarabi is trying to expose and limit this corruption, her influence is limited by both the scope of her office and by the political influence of the Chief of Police's allies, including Second Vice President Khalili. Law enforcement, justice, and rule of law will remain hollow concepts unless the ANP and Chief Prosecutor's office clean house. We must encourage MOI and MOJ to have zero tolerance for such corrupt activity at the highest level. At the base, we need to continue training ground level police officers to serve as credible and trustworthy agents of the law. The permanent Police Training Center would be a vital tool in these training efforts.

NEUMANN